





Making preschool
affordable and accessible





“Now is the time
to make access to
affordable, high-quality
preschool a promise
within reach for all
children and families
that make Indianapolis
their home.”

—Mayor Gregory A. Ballard





Statement of Need

All children deserve access to a high-quality education that enables them to define their life paths. There is a shared recognition that education is the key to a positive future for individual students, their families, their neighborhoods, and our city's social and economic vitality. However, we have yet to fulfill this promise for our children and city.

An increasing number of children in Indianapolis are growing up in poverty.¹ Like many low income children, they lack early exposure to words, language, books, mathematics, proper nutrition, and healthy socialization. Unfortunately, they have too much exposure to violence, trauma, and unstable housing situations which can negatively and permanently impact their life trajectories. As early as 18 months of age², we can already observe the educational and opportunity gaps that later lead to challenges in school and encounters with the criminal justice system. Despite the heroic efforts of many, these gaps often widen over time and have an adverse effect on a child's academic career and future prospects.³ Life in poverty creates hardships that are difficult for children and families to overcome.

Opportunity gaps persist as students make their way through the K – 12 pipeline. The average fourth grader growing up in a low-income community is already three grade levels behind.⁴ Children from affluent families have seen a 21-percentage-point increase in high school graduation rates between the 1970s and 1990s. Over the same time period, children from low income families only saw an increase of 4 percentage points.⁵ The continued widening of this gap limits upward mobility for children in poverty simply due to the conditions in which they were born.

Figure 1: Math test scores by income quartile

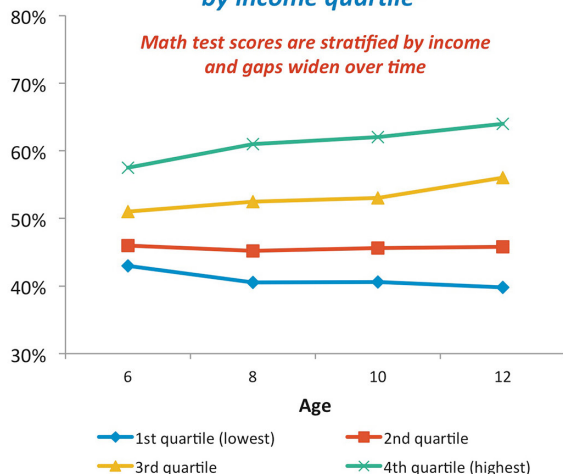
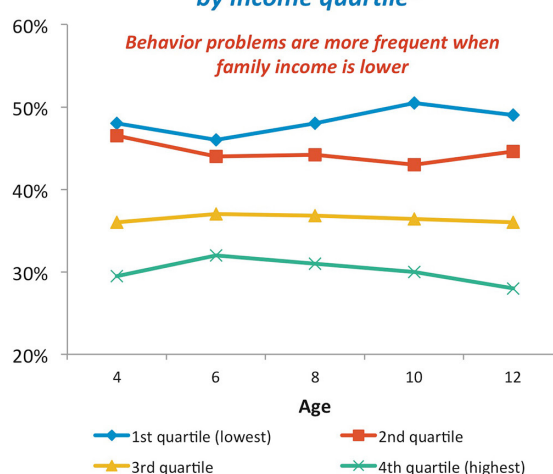


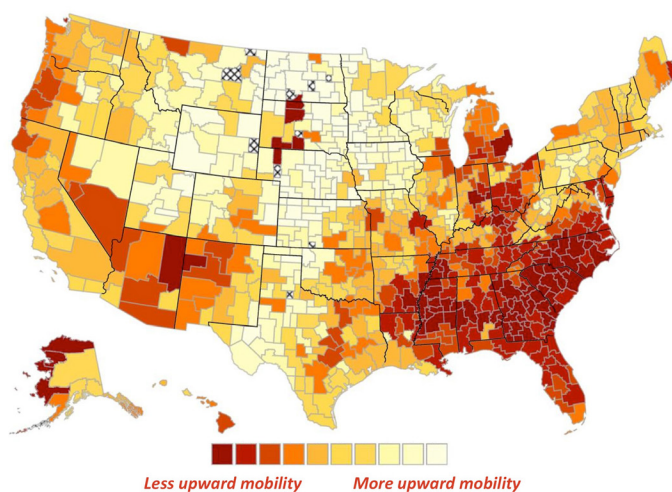
Figure 2: Anti-social behavior score by income quartile



Individual families and children are the direct victims of poverty and educational inequity, but they are not the only ones who end up impacted. Cities as a whole also suffer when poverty and inequity exist. A less educated, lower-earning citizenry leads to a smaller tax base through lower income taxes and decreases in a city's social and economic capital. This contributes to further increases in municipal spending on remedial education, health care, public safety, and social safety net services. Nationally, the costs associated with child poverty amount to more than 4% of U.S. GDP, which is over \$500 billion dollars per year, and includes lost productivity and earnings, costs of crime, and costs to health.⁶ This cost leads to lost investments in critical city infrastructure, and social programs.

Indianapolis is not unique in these challenges. Other cities facing similar problems — such as, Boston, Denver, Seattle, Chicago, San Francisco, New York City, Los Angeles, and the District of Columbia — have all initiated city preschool programs to supplement state funding. These city partnerships have the advantage of aligning public, private, and nonprofit efforts. Through such collaborative efforts these cities have been able to leverage funding, spur new partnerships and innovations, and focus attention on creating early childhood systems that respond to specific needs of the community.

Across Indianapolis, several innovative efforts are already underway to provide affordable and accessible preschool options to families. The United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) is working with philanthropic partners to improve program quality. Day Nursery is partnering with Vision Academy and Phalen Leadership Academy to offer high-quality preschool program utilizing the charter schools' facilities. In addition, Indianapolis Public Schools took a leading stance in offering free preschool for even more of its students over the past two years. Many other districts including Lawrence, Wayne, and Warren are also subsidizing large high-quality preschool programs through Title I funding in an effort to support the needs of the children and families in their neighborhoods.



Despite existing local and statewide efforts, there are still many families in need that are not receiving support to attend a high-quality program. There are approximately 14,000 four-year-olds in Marion County.⁷ There are approximately 5,000 four-year-olds in poverty, defined as below 100% of the federal poverty level. The Family and Social Services Administration highlighted the need for Marion County as even greater since over 8,000 four-year-olds will enter kindergarten below 185% of the federal poverty level, which qualifies them for free and reduced lunch.⁸ Approximately 2,200 four-year-olds are currently being served through federal programs such as Head Start and Child Care Development Fund vouchers.⁹

The gap in access is approximately 3,000 to 6,000 four-year-olds.¹⁰

In the following pages, Mayor Ballard proposes a program to serve approximately 1,300 four-year-olds each year to meaningfully address the highlighted gap.



The Case for Investment in Early Childhood Education

“... not only is early education effective, it is one of the best tools that policymakers can use to promote strong educational and societal outcomes for all children. ”

—James Heckman, Nobel Laureate economist

A comprehensive body of empirical evidence makes clear that well-designed, high-quality early childhood education programs can address many of the effects of childhood poverty. Addressing these effects leads to improved academic, socioeconomic, behavioral, and health outcomes, thus reducing costs to cities and societies.¹¹ This same body of research also indicates that high-quality preschool is particularly beneficial to students growing up in poverty.¹² Below is an overview of the most well-known findings of the best-studied preschool interventions over the past forty years:

Abecedarian

The Abecedarian study selected 112 children ages zero to five from 1972 - 1977 and provided year-round care (50 weeks) for ten hours per day at a cost of \$16,000 per year for three-year-olds and \$12,000 per year for four – and five-year-olds. The program targeted low-income children and provided home visits and free transportation.¹³ Children who were randomly assigned to attend the preschool program scored higher than their control-group peers on achievement tests, were less likely to repeat a grade or require special education, and had higher college attendance rates.¹⁴

Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC)

The Chicago CPC program provided three hours of care per day for 1,500 three- to five- year-old children from 1983 - 1986. The program cost approximately \$8,000 to provide early childhood education for 42 weeks per year. CPC children scored higher than their non-CPC peers on achievement tests, were less likely to repeat a grade or require special education, and were also more likely to graduate from high school.¹⁵



High/Scope Perry Preschool

The Perry Preschool study is widely cited as the only early childhood study with random assignment and participant follow-up to age 40. Researchers recruited the families of 123 low-income children with below-average IQs from Ypsilanti, Michigan in 1965. The treatment group participants, ages three to five, received educational enrichment for 2.5 hours per day for 36 weeks per year at a cost of approximately \$15,000. The program also emphasized parental involvement and included home visits. Participants were surveyed at ages 19, 27, and 40, and were found to have higher levels of education, higher earnings, lower rates of arrest and incarceration, and lower rates of welfare use.¹⁶

Abbott Preschool Program

The Abbott preschool program is widely cited as one of the most recent studies (2005-2006) demonstrating the success of a large scale, publicly funded, high-quality preschool programs for low income children. Abbott preschool serves 44,000 children and studied 553 participants. Children showed strong gains in language skills, reading, and math skills at kindergarten entry and those have persisted throughout early elementary school grades into 2nd grade. The two year effects are large enough to close about half the achievement gap between low-income children and their more advantaged peers. In addition, the number of students who had to repeat a grade was cut nearly in half.¹⁷

In summary, high-quality early childhood education targeting low-income children is associated with the following benefits.¹⁸



Academic Outcomes

Children attending high-quality preschool experience significant improvements in being school-ready compared to their peers who do not. Children in high-quality preschool programs gain about one-third of a year in learning outcomes across language, reading, and math.¹⁹ Over 20 years of evidence illustrates children attending these programs are less likely to repeat a grade or require special education, more likely to graduate from high school, and more likely to enroll in college. High-quality early childhood education reduces the costs to the K-12 system and creates a more highly educated workforce with the ability to sustain the economy.

Socioeconomic Outcomes

Children attending high-quality preschool experience higher earnings, increased rates of home ownership, and decreased dependency on welfare and social services. This creates a larger tax base and cost savings for means-tested programs, including TANF, WIC, SNAP, and Medicaid.



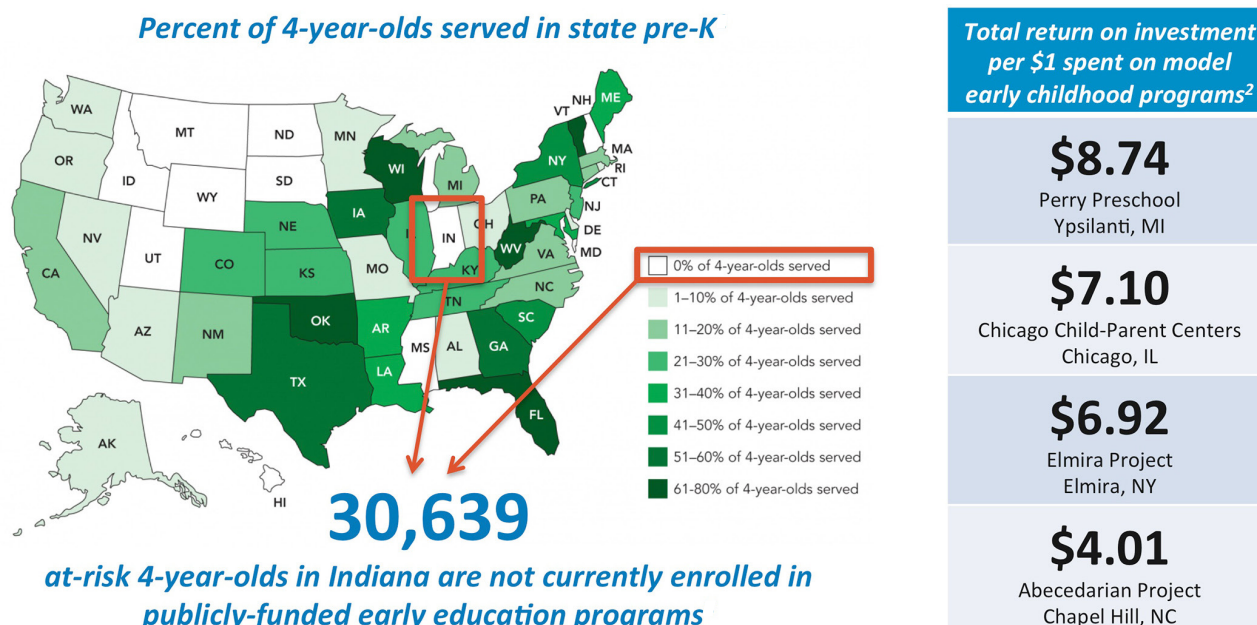
Behavioral Outcomes

Children attending high-quality preschool have fewer behavior problems in first grade,²⁰ reduced rates of juvenile arrest, and reduced felony and misdemeanor arrests in adulthood. These outcomes lead to fewer victims of crime, less damage to property, and reduced expenditures for public safety and criminal justice.

Health Outcomes

Children attending high-quality preschool have increased rates of immunization,²¹ improved overall child health status,²² decreased likelihood of smoking, and decreased risk of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases.²³ Cities benefit from reduced rates of preventable disease, reduced health care expenditures, and increased life expectancies.

Each of the benefits to individual children creates a multiplier effect. Numerous cost-benefit analyses find that the savings to individuals and society far outweigh the cost of providing high-quality early childhood education.²⁴ Studies have shown between \$1.80 and \$17.07 is returned for every dollar invested.²⁵ This return on investment translates into significantly reduced public expenditures on educational programs (such as remediation, grade retention, and special education services), reduced reliance on social services, reduced costs associated with crime and incarceration, and increased worker productivity contributing to additional tax revenue.²⁶

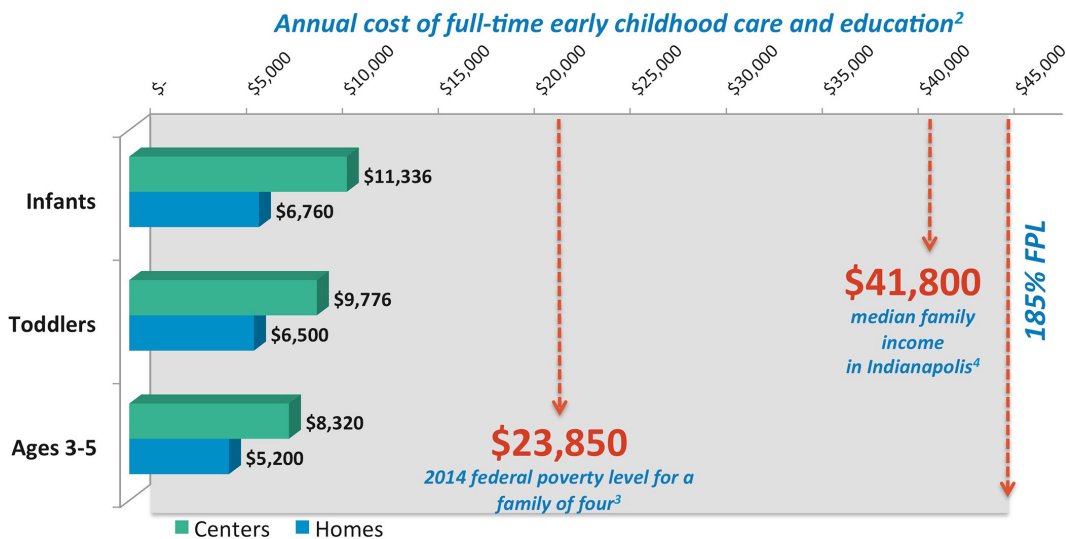


BARRIERS TO AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF PRESCHOOL

In 2013, Governor Mike Pence appointed the Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) comprised of statewide early childhood education experts who are charged with assessing the quality and availability of early education programs for young children. A recent ELAC report highlighted two primary barriers for families: (1) affordability of preschool and (2) accessibility of quality preschool programs.²⁷ These are the two barriers the City aims to address.

Affordability

High-quality preschool is unaffordable for many families in Indianapolis. The average high-quality (Level 3 or 4 on Paths to QUALITY™, Indiana's quality rating and improvement system for early care and education providers) preschool program costs \$4,708 to \$6,972 per year.²⁸ The federal poverty level for a family of four is \$23,850,²⁹ meaning quality preschool costs 20% - 29% of a typical family's income.³⁰ By contrast, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service considers childcare affordable if it does not exceed 10% of family income. The median income in Indianapolis is \$41,800 for a family of four, meaning \$4,180 would be a reasonable total cost for two children – or, \$2,090 per child. Currently, the costs of a high-quality program (absent a federal subsidy) are not within the means of a typical family. While federal subsidies are robust, they fail to meet the overwhelming need within our community. We know that if a family cannot afford a high-quality early learning program, they tend to enroll their children in lower quality programs or rely on family and friends. These lower quality options do not reap the same robust benefits for children and our city.



Accessibility

There are far too few high-quality preschool providers in Indianapolis. While Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and other surrounding school districts have expanded their offerings in the past several years, only 15% of all providers in Indianapolis are rated a Level 3 or Level 4 on Paths to QUALITY™. Early childhood education is traditionally provided in Marion County by a patchwork network of nearly 800 licensed centers, licensed homes, and registered ministries.

Many providers, whether schools or centers, experience barriers to addressing the facility needs that are necessary to achieve high levels of quality including appropriate bathrooms in every classroom, age-appropriate playground equipment, and appropriate sprinklers. Many others lack the books, educational materials, curricular supports, and other resources necessary to deeply engage young children and advance their academic and social well-being.

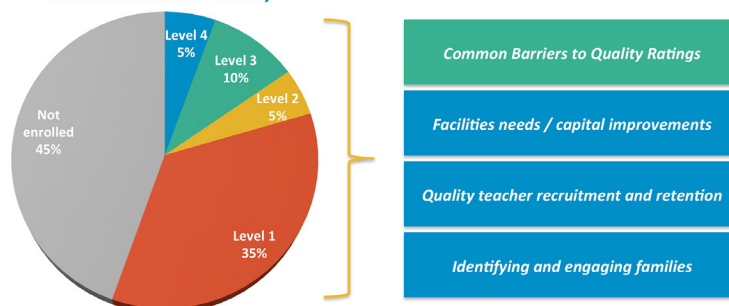
In addition, all providers struggle with recruiting, professionally developing, and retaining high-quality teachers for their programs. Early childhood professionals typically have starting salaries at or slightly above minimum wage, have difficult and demanding schedules, receive little to no in- and out-of-classroom support, and

suffer from poor benefits and career mobility. Inadequate compensation may keep down costs but it inhibits classroom quality, creates a situation where 50 percent annual teacher turnover is the norm, and disrupts care for children and their families.³¹

Finally, many families are not well-equipped to be advocates for their children given the complexity of our patchwork system. Even when a family is motivated to provide a high-quality early learning experience, navigating the early childhood education landscape is complicated.

There are over 800 providers, with varying quality, hours, licensing, accreditation, teacher quality and pay structures—differences that would take an immense amount of independent time and resources to understand and then navigate. While there is a strong local resource and referral service for parents that assists tens of thousands of families per year, its reach is still quite limited. More parents need access to good information that they can quickly and easily navigate.

Paths to QUALITY™ ratings of early education Providers in Marion County



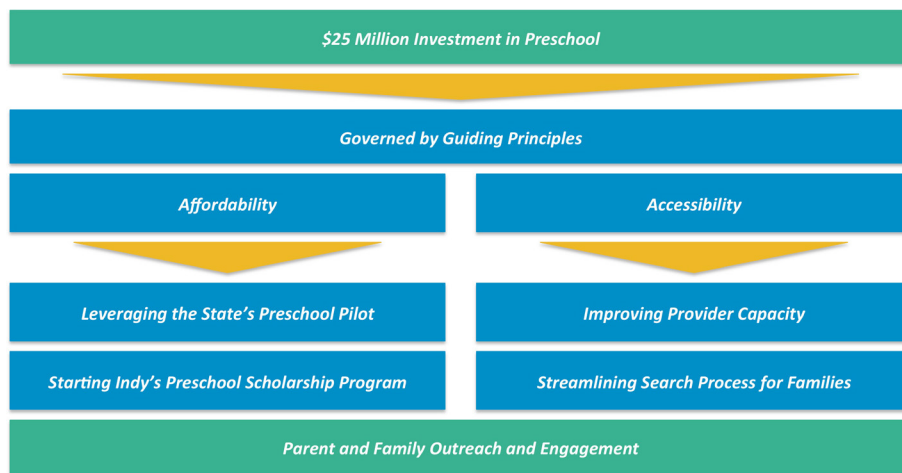
Our Vision

“Every child has a fundamental right to an excellent education.”

—Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, in his 2014 “State of the City” address

Our vision is for every child in Indianapolis to have access to a voluntary, high-quality early childhood education that prepares him or her for a successful academic career and success in life. To achieve this vision, Mayor Greg Ballard and the City of Indianapolis will provide up to \$25 million dollars in funding over five years to make preschool affordable and accessible for families. These funds will be appropriated in increments of up to \$5 million dollars per year, beginning in 2015. The City expects to see a combination of matching and aligned investments of an additional \$25 million. This full, public-private investment of \$50 million dollars over five years will transform the landscape of early childhood education in Indianapolis for children and prepare the city to effectively steward additional state or federal investments towards this vision.





With the initial \$25 million investment, our first priority will be to ensure that more families with four-year-olds earning below 185% of the federal poverty level will be able to access a high-quality preschool program. In the short term, this means prioritizing scholarships for four-year-olds in eligible families with the opportunity to attend a high-quality preschool program. These scholarships will directly address the problem of affordability for a large number of families and create demand for high-quality programs.

We also recognize that too few high-quality programs exist and more investments are needed to expand the number of spaces, support early childhood teachers, develop new partnerships, and strengthen the early childhood ecosystem. This will be an ongoing concern and investment opportunity. As the ecosystem improves and state funding expands, in later years, even more of our City investment can be responsibly dedicated to address affordability.

As a voluntary system, we envision that parents and all family caregivers will play a critical role in this effort. Priority will be given to programs that deeply engage parents and caregivers in their child's education. New tools will be created, and existing ones strengthened, to make it easier for parents and caregivers to navigate preschool options, and we will hold high expectations and esteem for every adult responsible for the school and life success of a child outside the classroom.

MAKING QUALITY PRESCHOOL AFFORDABLE

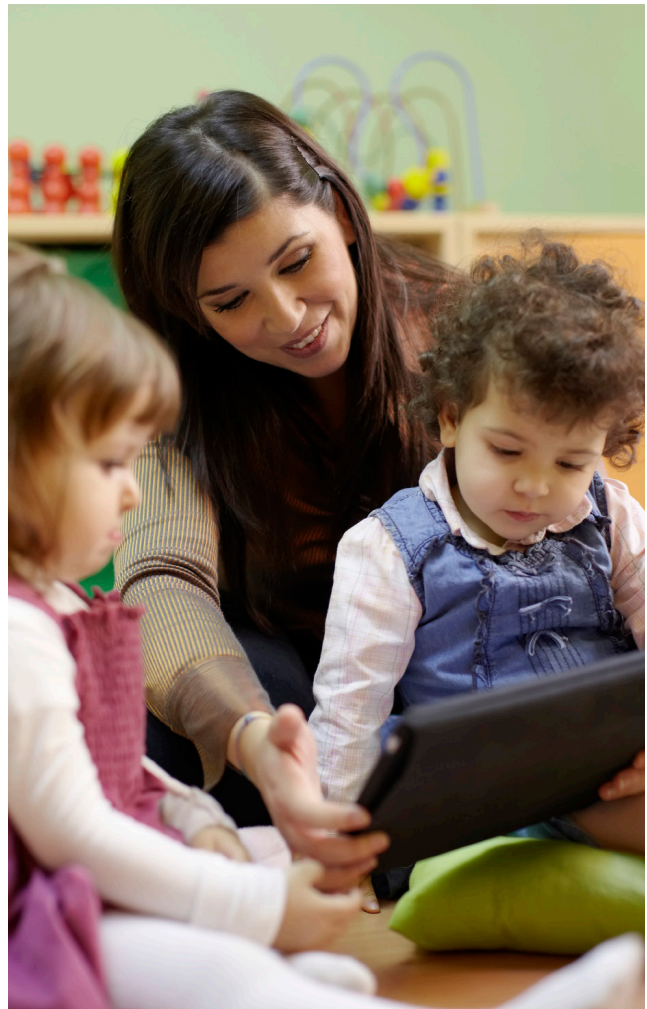
Our approach to addressing affordability has two major components:

1. Leveraging Indiana's new pre-K pilot investment

Indiana took a positive step in 2014 when Governor Mike Pence instituted House Enrolled Act 1004 and started the state's first preschool program with a \$10 million statewide appropriation. The City proposes first fully leveraging the State's matching dollars to provide access to preschool for the largest number of low-income, four-year-old children (as defined by the current legislation as 127% of poverty). In effect, we will use City resources to maximize this opportunity for residents who qualify. To understand the impact of this program, the ELAC is working with Indiana University to do a rigorous evaluation of the preschool pilot program at a state level.

2. Indy's Preschool Scholarship Program

The City will provide a public purpose grant to the United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) to supplement the State's program and expand access to quality preschool for four-year-olds in families up to 185% of the federal poverty level – a level that is more inclusive of families facing the affordability challenge. As with the state investment, resources will be reserved for existing high-quality programs. As many families as possible will be served, based on available appropriations, the existence of high-quality slots, and the competing need to work on access improvements (see next section). UWCI will take a leadership role in working with community leaders, education leaders, funders, and government representatives to define an efficient, simple, scholarship program that works for families and providers. UWCI will specifically target organizations meeting quality metrics and with a track record of success, among other criteria. UWCI will regularly report back to the City on progress and outcomes. Participating providers will be required to conduct and share the results of regular child assessments, so the City can be assured of the impact of its investment.



Investment

\$8 million per year or \$40 million over five years

Anticipated Outcomes

These scholarships will provide approximately 1,300 four-year-olds with access to a high-quality preschool program each year. Scholarships will be limited to \$6,800 for full day programs, and \$3,400 for half day programs thereby mirroring the State's program.

Partners

The Mayor's office will work alongside the City-County Council, United Way of Central Indiana, the Early Learning Advisory Committee, Child Care Answers, the Family and Social Services Administration's Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning, preschool providers, school districts, philanthropic organizations, small businesses, corporate partners, and other organizations willing to support this collective effort. Roles may include matching funding, publicizing opportunities, engaging parents, and aligning policies and programs to address affordability and accessibility.



MAKING HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL ACCESSIBLE

State and Indianapolis-specific scholarships are only effective at scale if there are a sufficient number of high-quality providers to educate young children. Mayor Ballard proposes providing a public purpose grant to UWCI to support: (1) direct investments in preschool providers and their teachers, in order to increase quality, and (2) more broad-based investments in the early childhood ecosystem that will create the conditions for quality programs to succeed.

These grant decisions will be guided by a set of core priorities:

- Moving providers to Level 3 or 4 on Paths to QUALITY or to national accreditation
- Supporting public schools and nonprofit providers in a mixed delivery system
- Contributing to a stronger birth through three continuum of care and education
- Focusing on areas of high crime with little access to quality preschool
- Partnering with schools and providers with a track record of serving children up to 185% of poverty
- Partnering with schools and providers that have the best, most-qualified teachers
- Partnering with agencies to serve children with additional risk factors
- Ensuring participation is completely voluntary to providers and parents
- Prioritizing providers that do not expel or suspend children from preschool
- Prioritizing preschools providing health and developmental screenings
- Prioritizing preschools that provide transportation or extended hours to meet the needs of working families
- Leveraging national, state, and other grant dollars

These grants will focus on the following uses (to be expanded with community input):

- Building and classroom renovations directly leading to improvements in quality;
- Purchasing evidence-based curriculum, books and other classroom supplies;
- Recruiting teachers, including creating new pipelines into the profession, and on-going education, including scholarships and tuition assistance, coaching and training, enhanced compensation, and other proven or promising retention strategies;
- Engaging parents, family caregivers and the public in quality preschool expansion;
- Developing innovative and scalable partnerships; and
- Creating more stable and consistent learning experiences for children, including more effective transitions into preschool and into kindergarten.

The City will also make quality, enriched information about preschools available to families. Funding will be used to launch and maintain the Indianapolis Preschool locator tool in partnership with GreatSchools.org, the Family and Social Services Administration, and Child Care Answers. This website and printed guide will be used to help inform families in Indianapolis about the programs that meet their needs and refer them to services. This will benefit families that are already accessing this website for K – 12 purposes and reinforce the connection between preschool and additional levels of schooling. Child Care Answers will be the resource and referral agency for supporting families once they are able to locate some options that fit their needs.

Investment

\$2 million per year or \$10 million over five years

Outcomes

These grants will support either new or existing providers in offering more high-quality seats to meet demand for Level 3 or 4 on Paths to QUALITY™ or national accredited sites. In addition, more providers will reach Level 3 or 4 on Paths to QUALITY™ or national accreditation.

Partners

The Mayor's office will work alongside the City-County Council, United Way of Central Indiana, the Early Learning Advisory Committee, Child Care Answers, the Family and Social Services Administration's Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning, preschool providers, school districts, philanthropic organizations, small businesses, corporate partners, and other organizations willing to support this collective effort. Roles may include matching funding, publicizing opportunities, engaging parents, and aligning policies and programs to address affordability and accessibility.



PROPOSED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The high-level roles and responsibilities of each of the key partners including the City, the United Way of Central Indiana, the City-County Council, and Child Care Answers are outlined below.

The City will be responsible for:

- Securing funding from the Council
- Supporting community conversations and ongoing education about the program
- Participating in the grant selection committee
- Encouraging providers, supporting organizations, and others to apply for grants
- Identifying matching and aligned investments
- Getting information out to families about the GreatSchools.org locator tool, Child Care Answers and other parent focused resources



The United Way of Central Indiana, as the recipient of the funds, will be responsible for:

- Organizing the grant selection committee process
- Facilitating community conversations and managing robust public comment
- Managing the creation and distribution of the Indy City Scholarship program
- Creating a common, streamlined grant process for managing application, selection and distribution of resources to grantees
- Stewarding public resources responsibility
- Reporting to the Mayor on progress
- Raising additional matches and aligned investments

The City-County Council will play a fundamental role by:

- Considering and approving the funding request
- Communicating opportunities to constituents
- Engaging parents and family caregivers to support preschool success

Child Care Answers will be responsible for:

- Identifying preschool providers to participate in the City's scholarship program
- Disseminating information to local preschool providers about grant opportunities
- Providing assistance through training, mentoring and coaching supports to local preschool providers attempting to improve quality
- Offering ongoing technical assistance to preschool providers as they implement a high-quality program

PROPOSED TIMELINE

Year One (2014) – quarters are reflective of a calendar year

- UWCI and Mayor's office hold series of public meetings (Q3)
- Mayor's office appropriates funds with City-County Council support (Q3)
- UWCI and Mayor's office appoints committee to oversee grant process(Q3)
- UWCI provides funds for the State's preschool program (Q4)
- UWCI hires consultants to build out common grant application, Indy Scholarship program process, and other processes (Q4)
- UWCI convenes commission to review progress (Q4)
- UWCI provides report to the Mayor on progress (Q4)

Year Two (2015) – Year Five (2018)

- UWCI convenes commission (Q1)
- UWCI finalizes recommendations for focusing grant funding based on public comment and the principles outlined in this document (Q1)
- UWCI releases first round of grants (Q1)
- UWCI, committee, and the Mayor's office decide on grantees (Q2)
- UWCI secures Council Approval (Q2)
- UWCI provides Mayor with report on grant application round (Q2)
- UWCI facilitates second round of grants if necessary (determined based on need)
- UWCI provides report to the Mayor on progress (Q4)

ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET

The City is proposing providing up to \$25 million over five years to be used to spur innovation. We anticipate the usage of these funds will be responsive to market demands and community-identified needs over the five-year horizon. The table below is only intended to illustrate how these funds might be allocated over time, serving as a road map, not an authoritative guide, for UWCI and the committee.

Assumptions

- We expect a robust initial investment in matching state pre-K funding, with remaining funds being used for additional Indy City scholarships
- More families will likely receive subsidies in later years at higher income levels as the State solidifies the pre-K program
- The City anticipates access improvements will be made initially through facility-related needs, but understands that as capacity increases, the need for improvements in other capacity-building items (such as teaching training, partnerships, and other support) will increase.

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
Affordability	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Accessibility	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Total	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000



Conclusion

High-quality preschool makes sense for individual children, neighborhoods, and our city. It enhances academic success and future economic opportunities, reduces crime, and improves the vitality of the city.

Now is the time for Indianapolis to take action to address affordability and expand access for our most vulnerable children.

By doing so, we will enable our city's children to define their own life paths while also safeguarding the long-term social and economic well-being of Indianapolis.

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